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Thomas Hickathrift

**The history of
Thomas Hickathrift**

[S.I.]

[179-?]

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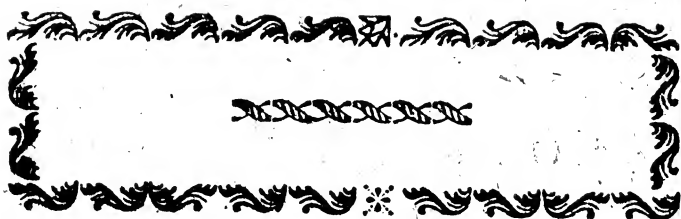
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THE
HISTORY,
OF
Thomas Hickathrift.
PART THE FIRST.



Printed for the Travelling Stationers.



The first Part of
Thomas Hickathrift.



CHAP. I.

Tom's Birth and Parentage.

IN the reign of William the Conqueror, I have read in ancient Records, there lived in the Isle of Ely, in Cambridge-shire, a Man named Thomas Hickathrift, a poor Labourer, yet he was an honest stout Man, and able to do as much work in a Day as two ordinary Men. Having only one Son, he called him after his

Name, Thomas. The old Man put
Son to School, but he would learn
thing.

God called the old Man aside, his
other, being tender of her Son, main-
tained him by her own Labour as well as
could; but all his Delight was in the
chimney corner; and he eat as much at
one as would serve five ordinary Men.
When ten Years old he was six Feet high, and
his face in thickness: his Hand was like a
boulder of Mutton, and every other part
proportionable; but his great strength
was yet unknown.



CHAP.



CHAP II.

How Tom Hickathrift's great Strength came to be known.



TOM's Mother being a poor Widow, went to a rich Farmer's house to beg a Bundle of Straw, to shift herself and her Son Thomas—The Farmer being an honest charitable Man, bid her take what she wanted. She going home to her son Thomas, said, pray go to such a Place, and fetch me a Bundle of Straw; I have asked leave.—He swore he would not go.—Nay, pr'ythee go, said the old Mother.—Again he swore he would not

unless she would borrow him a Cart Rope. She being willing to pleasure him, went and borrowed one.

Then taking the Cart Rope away he went, and coming to the Farmer's House, the Master was in the Barn, and two Men thrashing.

Said Tom, I am come for a Burden of Straw.—Tom, said the Farmer, take as much as thou can'st carry. So he laid down his Cart-Rope, and began to make up his Burden.

Your Rope, Tom, said they, is too short, and jeered him. But he fitted the Farmer well for his Joke, for when he had made up his Burden, it was supposed it might be two thousand Weight.—But says they, what a Fool art thou? for thou canst not carry the tythe of it. But however, he took up the Burthen, and made no more of it than we do of an hundred Weight, to the great Admiration of Master and Men.

Now Tom's strength beginning to be known in the town, they would not let him lie lurking in the Chimney Corner, every one hiring him to work, seeing he had so much Strength, all telling him it

was a Shame for him to lie idle as he did from Day to Day, so that Tom finding them bate at him as he did, went first to one Work, and then to another.

At last a Man came to him, and desired him to go with him to the Wood to help him to bring a Tree Home; so Tom went with him and four other Men.

And when they came to the Wood, they set the Cart by the Tree, & began to draw it by Pulleys; but Tom seeing them not able to stir it, said aloud, stand aside Fools. And set on one End, and then put it into the Cart—There, said he, see what a Man can do.—Marry, said they, that's true.



Having done. and coming through the Wood, they met the Woodman; & Tom

asked him for a stick to make his Mother a fire with.-- Aye said the woodman take one.

So Tom took up a Tree bigger than that on the Cart, and put it on his Shoulder, and walked Home with it faster than the six Horses in the Cart drew the other.

This was the second Instance of Tom's shewing his Strength, by which Time he began to know that he had more natural Strength than 20 common Men; and from this Time Tom began to grow very tractable: he would jump, run, and take



Delight in young Company, and ride to Fairs and Meetings, to see Sports and Diversions.

One Day, going to a Wake, where the young men were met, some went to wrestling, and some to cudgels, some throwing the Hammer and the like.



Tom stood awhile to see the Sport, and at last he joined the Company throwing the Hammer; at length he took the Hammer in his Hand, and felt the weight of it, bidding them stand out of the Way, for he would try how far he could throw it; —Aye, said the old Smith, you will throw it a great Way I warrant you.

Tom took the Hammer, and giving it a swing, threw it into a River five or six Furlongs distant, and bid them fetch it out.

After this Tom joined the Wrestlers. and though he had no more skill than an Afs, yet by main strength he flung all he grappled with; if once he laid old they were gone, some he threw over his head, and others he laid down gently. He did not attempt to lock, or strike at their heels but thrēw them two or three yards from him, and sometimes on their heads, ready to break their Neck. So that at last none durst enter the ring to wrestle with him for they took him to be some Devil among them.

Thus was the Fame of Tom's great Strength spread more and more about the Country.



CHAP.



CHAP III.

Tom becomes a Brewer's Servant; and of his killing a Giant, and gaining the Title of Mr. Hickathrift.



TOM's Fame being spread, no one durst give him an angry Word; for he being fool-hardy cared not what he did; so that those who knew him would not displease him. At last a Brewer of Lynn, who wanted a lusty Man to carry Beer to the Marsh, and to Wisbeach, hearing of Tom, came to hire him; but Tom would not hire himself, until his

Friends persuaded him, and the Master promised him a new Suit of Cloaths from Top to Toe, and besides, that he should eat and drink of the best. At last Tom consented to be his Man; and the Master shewed him which Way he was to go; for there was a monstrous Giant, who kept part of the Marsh. and none durst go that Way; for if the Giant found them, he would either kill them, or make them his Slaves.

But to come to Tom and his Master; Tom did more in one Day, than all the rest of his Men did in three; so that his Master seeing him so tractable, and careful in his Business, made him his head Man, and trusted him to carry Beer by himself, for he needed none to help him. Thus Tom went each Day to Wisbeach, which was a long Journey of twenty Miles.

Tom going this Journey so often, and finding the other Road the Giant kept, nearer by the half, and Tom having increased his Strength by being so well kept and improved his Courage by drinking so much strong Ale; one Day as he was going to Wisbeach, without saying

any Thing to his Master, or any of his fellow Servants, he resolved to make the nearest Road, or lose his Life ; to win the Horse, or lose the Saddle ; to kill, or be killed, if he met the Giant.

Thus resolved, he goes the nearest way with his Cart, flinging open the Gates, in order to go through ; but the Giant soon espied him, and seeing him a daring Fellow, vowed to stop his Journey, and make a Prize of his Beer ; but Tom cared not a Fart for him ; and the Giant met him like a roaring Lion, as though he would have swallowed him.

Sirrah, said he, who gave you authority to come this way ? Do you not know that I make all stand in fear of my Sight ? and you like an impudent Rogue, must come and fling open my Gates at Pleasure. Are you so careless of your Life, that you do not care what you do ? I'll make you an Example to all under the Sun. Do'st thou not see how many Heads hang upon yonder Tree, that have offended my Laws ? thine shall hang higher than them all.

A turd in your Teeth, said Tom, you shall not find me like one of them. No

said the Giant, why you are but a Fool, if you come to fight me. and bring no Weapon to defend yourself. Cries Tom, I have got a Weapon here shall make you know I am your Master. Aye, say you so, Sirrah said the Giant, and then ran to his Cave to fetch his Club, intending to dash out his Brains at one blow.



While the Giant was gone for his Club, Tom turn'd his Cart upside down, taking the Axletree and Wheel for his sword and Buckler, and excellent Weapons they were on such an Emergency.

The Giant coming out again, began to stare at Tom to see him take the Wheel

in one Hand, and the Axle-tree in the other.

Oh ! oh ! said the Giant, you are likely to do great Things with these Instruments; I have a Twig here that will beat thee, and thy Axletree and thy Wheel to the Ground.



Now that which the Giant called a twig was as thick as a Mill-post; with this the Giant made a Blow at Tom with such a Force, as made the Wheel crack. Tom nothing daunted, gave him as brave a Blow on the Side of his Head, which made him reel again.—What, said Tom, are you got drunk with my small Beer already?—The Giant recovering made many hard Blows at Tom; but still, as they came, he kept them off with his Wheel, so that he received but very little hurt.

In the mean time Tom plied him so with Blows, that the Sweat and Blood ran together down the Giant's Face; who being fat and foggy, was almost spent with fighting so long, begged Tom to let him drink, and then he would fight him again — No, said Tom, my Mother did not teach me such Wit; who's Fool then? whereupon finding the Giant grow weak, Tom redoubled his Blows till he brought him to the Ground. — The Giant finding himself overcome, roared heidiously, and begged Tom would spare his Life, and he would perform any Thing he should desire, even yield himself unto him, and be his Servant.

But Tom having no more Mercy on him than a Dog upon a Bear, laid on him till he found him breathless, and then cut off his Head, after which he went into the Cave and there found great Store of Gold and Silver, which made his Heart leap for Joy.

When he had rummaged the Cave, and refreshed himself a little, he restored the Wheel and Axletree to their former places, and loaded his Beer on his Cart, and went to Wisbeach, where he delivered his Beer,

and returned Home the same Night as usual.

Upon his Return to his Master, he told him what he had done, which though he was rejoiced to hear, he could not altogether believe, till he had seen it were true. Next Morning Tom's Master went with him to the Place, to be convinced of the truth; as did most of the Inhabitants of Lynn. When they came to the Place they were rejoiced to find the Giant quite dead; and when Tom shewed them the Head, and what Gold and Silver there were in the Cave, all of them leaped for Joy; for the Giant had been a great Enemy to that Part of the Country.

News was soon spread that Thomas Hickathrift had killed the Giant, and happy was he that could come to see the Giant's Cave; and Bonfires were made all round the Country for Tom's Success.

Tom by the general Consent of the country took possession of the Giant's Cave, and his Riches. He pulled down the Cave, and built himself a handsome House on the Spot. Part of the Giant's Lands he gave to the Poor for their Common, and the rest he devided and enclosed for an Estate

to maintain him and his Mother. Now Tom's Fame spread more and more thro' the Country, and he was no longer called plain Tom, but Mr. Hickathrift; and they feared his Anger now almost as much as they did that of the Giant before.

Tom now finding himself very rich, resolv'd his Neighbours should be the better for it; he inclosed himself a Park, and kept Deer; and just by his House he built a Church, which he dedicated to St. James, because on that Day he killed the Giant.



CHAP.

CHAP IV.

*How Tom kept a Pack of Hounds, and of his
- being attacked by four Highwaymen.*

TOM not being used to have such a Stock of Riches, could hardly tell how to dispose of it, but he used Means to do it, for he kept a Pack of Hounds,



and Men to hunt them ; and who but Tom? he took such Delight in Sports and Exercises, that he would go far and near to a merry Meeting.

One Day as Tom was riding, he saw a Company at Football, and dismounted to see them play for a Wager ; but he spoiled

all their Sport, for meeting the Football, he gave it such a Kick, that 'they never found it more, whereupon they began to quarrel with Tom, but some of them got little good by it; for he got a Spar, which belonged to an old House that had been blown down, with which he drove all Opposition before him, and made Way wherever he came.



After this, going Home late in the Evening, he was met by four Highwaymen all mounted, who had robbed all the Passengers that travelled this Road. When they saw Tom, and found that he was alone, they were cock-sure of his Money, and bid him stand and deliver.——What must I deliver, cries Tom.——Your Money, Sirrah, said they.——Aye, said Tom,

but you shall give me better Words for it first and be better armed too——Come, come, said they, we came not here to prate, but for Money, and Money we will have before we go. Is it so said Tom, then get and take it.



Whereupon one of them made at him with a trusty Sword, which Tom immediately wrenched out of his Hand, and attacked the whole four with it, and made them set Spurs to their Horses; but seeing one had a Portmanteau behind him, and supposing it contained Money, he more closely pursued them, and soon overtook them and cut their Journey short, killing two of them, and sadly wounding the other two; who begging hard for their Lives, he let them go; but took away all

their Money which was above two Hundred Pounds, to bear his expences Home.

When Tom came Home he told them how he had served the poor Foot-ball Players ; and also related his Engagement with the four Thieves, which produced much Laughter among the whole Company.



CHAP.



CHAP. V.

*Tom meets with a Tinker, and of the
Battle they fought.*



SOME Time afterwards, as Tom was walking about his Estate, to see how his Workmen went on, he met upon the Skirts of his Forest, a very sturdy Tinker, having a good Staff on his Shoulder, and an Als to carry his Budget of Tools, So Tom asked the Tinker from whence he came, and whither he was going? as that was no Highway. And the Tinker being a very sturdy Fellow, bid him go look;—what was that to him? but Fools must always be meddling.—Hold, said

Tom, before you and I part I will make you know who I am.—Aye, said the Tinker, it is three Years since I had a Combat with any Man; I have challenged many a one, but none dare face me, so I think they are all Cowards in this Part of the Country; but I hear there is a Man lives hereabouts, named Tom Hickathrift, who has killed a Giant; him I'd willingly see to have a Bout with.—Aye, said Tom, I am the Man, what have you to say to Me?—truly, said the Tinker, I am glad we are so happily met, that we may have one touch.—Surely, said Tom, you are but in jest.—Marry, said the Tinker, I am in earnest.—A Match, said Tom.—It is done said the Tinker.—But said Tom, will you give me Leave to get a Twig.—Aye, said the Tinker, I hate him that fights with a Man unarmed.

So Tom stepped to a Gate, and took a Rail for a Staff.—To it they fell, the Tinker at Tom, and Tom at the Tinker, like two Giants.—The Tinker had a Leather Coat on, so that every Blow that Tom gave him, made him roar again; yet the Tinker did not give way an Inch, 'till Tom gave

him such a Bang on the Side of the Head as fell him to the Ground.—Now Tinker, where art thou; said Tom.—But the Tinker being a nimble Fellow, leaped up again and gave Tom a Bang which made him reel, and following his Blows, took Tom on the other Side, which made him throw down his Weapon and yield the Tinker the best of it.

After this Tom took the Tinker to his House, where we shall leave them to improve their Acquaintance, and get themselves cured of the Bruises they gave each other.

The End of the First Part.

